

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

The listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

Claims 1 - 29 (cancelled).

30. (currently amended) An absorbent sanitary article for absorbing body fluids which comprises a matrix containing metallic silver and a fiber having an outer surface including depressions, characterized in that the silver is chemically or physically attached exclusively to the surface including the surface in the depressions and cannot be flushed away from the fiber in use of the sanitary article.

Claim 31 (cancelled).

32. (previously presented) An absorbent sanitary article according to claim 30, characterized in that the fiber is a synthetic fiber.

33. (previously presented) An absorbent sanitary article according to claim 32, characterized in that said synthetic fiber is formed of a polymer selected from the group consisting

of polyamides, polyesters, polyacrylics, elastanes and polychlorides.

34. (previously presented) An absorbent sanitary article according to claim 33, characterized in that the synthetic fiber is present in the form of a discrete fiber, a woven, a non-woven or a thread, and said silver is present in the form of bound particles from 1 to 30 nm in diameter and in an amount equal to about 3% of the fiber weight.

35. (previously presented) An absorbent sanitary article according to claim 30, characterized in that the fiber has a silver content of not more than 3%.

36. (previously presented) An absorbent sanitary article according to claim 30, characterized in that the silver content of the fiber is just high enough to ensure that an antimicrobial effect is detectable for not more than 24 hours on a first article surface of the sanitary article intended for body contact.

37. (previously presented) An absorbent sanitary article according to claim 30, characterized in that the metallic silver

is present in the form of bound particles from 1 to 30 nm in diameter.

38. (previously presented) An absorbent sanitary article according to claim 37, characterized in that the metallic silver is present in the form of bound particles from 1 to 10 nm in diameter.

39. (previously presented) An absorbent sanitary article according to claim 38, characterized in that the metallic silver is present in the form of bound particles from 1 to 6 nm in diameter.

40. (previously presented) An absorbent sanitary article according to claim 30, characterized in that the metallic silver fully surrounds the outer surface of the fiber.

41. (previously presented) An absorbent sanitary article according to claim 30, characterized in that the sanitary article contains at least one of a pulp and a superabsorbent.

42. (previously presented) An absorbent sanitary article according to claim 30, characterized in that the sanitary article is constructed as a disposable article.

43. (previously presented) An absorbent article according to claim 30, characterized in that the sanitary article is constructed as a diaper, a pants-type diaper, a training pant, an incontinence pad, a feminine hygiene article, a sanitary napkin, a panty liner or a tampon.

44. (previously presented) An absorbent sanitary article according to claim 30, characterized in that the fiber is in the form of discrete fibers, woven fibers, non-woven fibers or threads in dispersed piecewise in the matrix.

45. (previously presented) An absorbent sanitary article according to claim 30, characterized in that the fiber is in the form of discrete fibers, woven fibers, non-woven fibers or threads disposed within a layer of the sanitary article.

46. (previously presented) An absorbent sanitary article according to claim 45, characterized in that said sanitary article includes a first article surface intended for body

contact and a second article surface not intended for body contact, and the layer is disposed closer to the first article surface.

47. (previously presented) An absorbent sanitary article according to claim 46, characterized in that the layer is closer to the first article surface than to the mid-point between the first article surface and the second article surface.

48. (previously presented) An absorbent sanitary article according to claim 30, wherein the fiber is present in the form of a discrete fiber, a woven, a non-woven or a thread, and said silver is present in the form of bound particles from 1 to 30 nm in diameter and in an amount sufficient to ensure an antimicrobial effect detectable for not more than 24 hours at a first body contact surface of the sanitary article.

49. (currently amended) A process for producing an absorbent sanitary article for absorbing body fluids which comprises a matrix containing metallic silver, comprising the steps of disposing a fiber having an outer surface that includes depressions in said matrix and binding said metallic silver exclusively to said fiber surface including the surface in the

depressions so that the metallic silver cannot be flushed away from the fiber surface in use of the sanitary article.

50. (previously presented) A process according to claim 49, wherein the binding step includes applying silver to the fiber surface by electro, chemical or electrochemical deposition or by vapor deposition.

51. (previously presented) A process according to claim 49 wherein the silver is bound to the fiber by means of a chemical or physical bond.

Claim 52 (cancelled).

53. (previously presented) A process according claim 49, wherein the surface of the fiber is mordanted prior to the binding of the silver.

54. (previously presented) A process according to claim 49, wherein the fiber is a synthetic fiber.

55. (previously presented) A process according to claim 49, wherein the silver is applied at a weight of up to a 3% based on the weight of the fiber.

56. (previously presented) A process according to claim 49, wherein the silver is only applied at a weight just high enough to ensure that an antimicrobial effect is detectable for not more than 24 hours on a first body contact surface of the sanitary article.

57. (previously presented) A process according to claim 49, wherein the metallic silver is bound in the form of particles from 1 to 30 nm in diameter.

58. (previously presented) A process according to claim 49, wherein the metallic silver is applied such that the outer surface of the fiber is fully surrounded by silver.

59. (previously presented) A process according to claim 49, wherein at least one of a pulp and a superabsorbent is incorporated in the sanitary article.

60. (previously presented) A process according to claim 49, characterized in that the fiber is in the form of discrete fibers, woven fibers, non-woven fibers or threads disbursed within the sanitary article in piecewise form.

61. (currently amended) A process according to claim 49, characterized in that the fiber is in the form of discrete fibers, woven fibers, non-woven fibers or threads ~~is~~ disposed within a layer of the sanitary article.

62. (previously presented) A process according to claim 61, characterized in that said sanitary article includes a first article surface intended for body contact, and a second article surface not intended for body contact, and the layer is disposed closer to the first surface.

63. (previously presented) A process according to claim 62, characterized in that the layer is closer to the first article surface than to the mid-point between the first article surface and the second article surface.